Volume XIII Chicago, Ill., February, 1937 Number 11

The Liberalist

Lincoln

I knew the man. I see him as he stands
With gifts of mercy in his outstretched hands;
A kindly light within his gentle eyes,
Sad as the toil in which his heart grew wise;
His lips half-parted with the constant smile
That kindled truth, but foiled the deepest guile;
His head bent forward, and his willing ear
Divinely patient right and wrong to hear:
Great in his goodness, humble in his state,
Firm in his purpose, yet not passionate.
He led his people with a tender hand,
And won by love a sway beyond command;
Summoned by lot to mitigate a time
Frenzied by rage, unscrupulous with crime,
He bore his mission with so meek a heart
That Heaven itself took up his people's part,
And when he faltered, helped him ere he fell,
Eking his efforts out by miracle.
No king this man, by grace of God's intent;
No, something better, freeman—President!
A nature, modeled on a higher plan,
Lord of himself, an inborn gentleman!

—George Henry Boker.

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The Peoples Church

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THE LIBERALIST

Preston Bradley ..... **Editor**

Grace Thayer Bradley ..... **Associate Editor**

Volume XIII Chicago, Ill., February, 1937 Number 11

MEDITATION

"As we gather together some of us within the confines of these precincts which have become very dear and very precious to us, others sitting quietly in their homes under a great variety of circumstances, others perhaps along the highways on their way about a mission, others quietly in some camp in the North Woods working in the lumber industry, others in institutions which we have heard of this week, men who have become so anti-social in their relationships that it has been necessary for them and for society to be mutually protected, wherever these words are going that they might be freighted with the spirit of Love, of inspiration and of understanding. Perhaps some heart hearing these words is experiencing the agony of condemnation and that which appeared so bright and beautiful, so glamorous and winsome, has turned into the dead ashes of decay and remorse and they might have just tuned in, or may have come into this service, and we would ask that something may be done here this morning, or said, that might touch that life again with the renewal of life's beauty, that out of the dead ashes of the night past there might grow the beautiful flower of a better life. To everyone agonizing under the tragedy of life, of every race and every color and every creed, wherever men at their sacred altars in every church of the land shall be administering that sustenance and food for the spiritual development of their people, might they be blessed. Wherever some lonely heart is struggling to keep the light of love aglow upon the altar of the world's coldness, may they be blessed too in these days when there is so much hatred and so much criticism and so much confusion and so much disillusionment.

We are grateful for this moment when we can submerge all these interfering influences and reverently with dignity approach the eternal and fundamental basis upon which all else operates and depends.

Today we would open our minds, we would open our hearts, we would send as the personality of this service a constructive philosophy of life, we would recapture again an emphasis so that we might steadily and courageously work out this problem until every year will find us more highly advanced, and every day as it closes find our lives more significantly lived. Forbid that we should ever, ever hurt or multilate life, that we should ever be prevented from the realization of that which we seek and that toward which we strive."

"LENT"

Sermon by Dr. Preston Bradley, Pastor of The Peoples Church of Chicago, February 14, 1937

"Like so many of the practices and customs of organized Christianity, the institution of Lent and the name of Lent is not associated, neither does it have anything to do, with Christianity as such. The word itself 'Lent' and the derivations, from the old English word which is 'Lencten' and the old German word which is 'lenz' means Spring or lengthening, and the original significance of the word Lent meant that time of the year in which occurs the lengthening of the days. It is identified and closely associated with the coming of the springtime. Organized and institutionalized Christianity after the council of Nicaea in 325 A. D., 325 years after the birth of Jesus when the council of Nicaea was held, was the first time in the history of religious practices that we find any celebration, or any observance rather, of anything which could now possibly be construed as the practice of Lent, and one who has studied the history and development of the practice of Lent as it is practiced by the liturgical churches of Christianity finds some very interesting things along the way of that history.

There were several periods in the life of the church when it was confined only to holy week, when the church did not celebrate 40 days, but rather the last seven days in the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus. There were other times when the practices of Lent were governed almost entirely on the physical and environmental conditions of the people, a long period of time in English history in which the economic interests, because of the attitude of not eating meats during the Lenten season, aroused such a reaction on the part of those who owned and controlled the slaughter houses of Great Britain that it became a matter of decision for the Crown and became a Parliamentary problem and there was a modification. This, of course, was before the Reformation, there was a modification of the practices of Lent based upon the pressure of those who had economic interests involved. So, now, we have come to the practice of Lent as an established custom and the Christian churches, both Catholic and Protestant in various branches, utilize these 40 days of the Lenten period in an effort to remake and to revitalize certain fundamental principles which have to do with the devlopment of a religious life and the cultivation of a religious personality.

There are vast numbers of people for whom this sason has no significance because they have no loyalties to any religious institution which makes an effort to preserve it and to practice the period. Many people feel that the lenten period is just another one of those ecclesiastical parts of the year and that it means nothing to them at all. They are not interested in it, they are not concerned about it, it has no appeal to them in any particular.

I would like to make myself clear on this period because while I do not accept in any sense the theological implications of institutionalized religion, and have not accepted them for a great many years, I cannot help but feel that this period, like practically every other period in the practice of organized religion, has some very definite, well defined and established values, and although we may not have any ecclesiastical loyalties in the practice of Lent, and although we may feel that it is no concern of ours, and a great many people who are religious liberals feel that it has utterly no significance for them at all, what I want to do this morning, if I possibly can, is

to bring to each individual present in the congregation and each individual listening to the broadcast, an idea of Lent which is quite removed from any of the ecclesiasticisms and quite removed from any of the impositions of a supernatural affair. I want to look at this idea of Lent on the basis of reality, I mean a reality which comes out of the necessary disciplining which is an important factor in the development of the spiritual consciousness. I think that that is perfectly obvious to most thoughtful people. Of course, if an individual is so seared and so steeped in a materialism and so deeply and so definitely a part of a materialistic philosophy and a materialistic attitude that the word 'spiritual' to them connotates unreality, well then, of course, these words are meaningless, and an individual in that position, to me, does not have my scorn, does not have my contempt, but quite the contrary has my deepest pity.

I see people every day of my life whose lives are in such a jam who are dissatisfied, who are frustrated, who are defeated, who are in turmoil, who haven't the remotest idea of the strength of poise, who have never been able to cultivate a definite procedure of will control and who are just like leaves upon the autumn wind, blown about by every gust, they have no sense of direction, they have lost all ability to determine values, they are spiritual vagabonds, they are restless, weary, broken hearts, and most of them live in Heartbreak House. These people attempt to find some abandonment for these realities of life in those practices which only increase their difficulty rather than assist them. And so we find them, as they seek releasement and seek for abandonment, we find them only increasing their own tragedy, and all this is unnecessary, all of it need not be. And when I realize how true that is, even though it may sound somewhat dogmatic, none of these things need be in a human life. There is not a life present in this service, nor one out there that I cannot see, that need be on the low levels. When they are on the low levels trouble, consternation, sorrow and tragedy only increase by their own incompetency, their own complications of life. I pause sometimes as I meet them and I envy the opportunity and the rare privilege of saying or being something to such a life that will assist them in the rehabilitation and in the recovery. One of the opportunities, if we would only expose ourselves to them, for the readjustment of human conditions of life, is to be found in the implications of this Lenten season. It is not merely an institution of the church, it is not merely a practice of an organized ecclesiasticism, it is something vastly deeper than that, and it is into the recesses of this truth that I would take you for a few moments this morning.

I think that one of the greatest interferences to a realization of a supremely mastered life is to be found in our confusions over this question of our ideals. We have been so persistent in holding up so far off the ideal of life that the chasm between us and the realization of that ideal has never been spanned, and sometimes I just wonder if we do not set a too high standard for ourselves. I know that this may appear somewhat heretical, and on first appearance might be somewhat of a shock, but you and I know that there is a great field of unreality or realism, and religion has been so primarily concerned with the principles of idealism that the essence of realism is very definitely neglected and we constantly take a sort of a quiet satisfaction in our incompetency to approximate our own ideals, and consequently we sort of feel that it is not such a tragic thing to fail after all because our ideals were so high, and it has been the attitude of most of us and practically all religionists to set an idealism way off above and beyond any possibility of attainment so that

in the areas of achievement there is always this broad chasm between realization and conception of ideals.

I think we need to reorganize ourselves on the basis of what constitutes realism. I think that the unrealities implicated in religion have been one of its obstacles. I think it has been an obstacle from the pew and from the pulpit and that this far off vision of eccentric idealism that only a God could possibly realize has given to us all about religion a sense of unreality, Therefore the unreality of religion has created an opportunity of aloofness and I think that partly explains today why over one-half of the population of the United States never darkens the door of any church, Catholic, Jewish or Protestant, and why by far today, in the City of Chicago there are thousands and thousands and thousands of people every Sunday who never find any impetus or never experience any need for entering any House of worship. Religion, to them, just does not register. They are quite willing to make every effort to exhaust life on the basis of their own resources and their own potentiality and I think that part of this—and I only submit it to you for your thoughtful consideration at your leisure—I am quite convinced that part of this neglect and part of this atmosphere of impotency which the church has, of utter impotency, that human lives do not feel that there is any need for religion, that no church has anything to offer them, there may be sermons and there may be the practice of various aspects of religion, there may be the church year set off in certain demarcations, but that the vitality, the vitality of human need does not turn people toward the sources of religious enthusiasms, and I think part of that difficulty is to be attributed to our idealisms, strange as that may appear on first thought.

Mr. Gilbert Chesterton, in one of those brilliant moments of his scintillating and analytical mind, made this most characteristic and most valuable remark, that reality was that function or that which we thought of as our own sin, but realism was that which we think of as the sin of another. There can be no beginning for the sense of spiritual supremacy for an individual life without a realistic conception of their own condition. That must always predicate a sense of need. Therefore, when people find, in the artificial stimulus of life, and in the artificial enthusiasms of life, an opportunity for abandonment into unreality, there comes a moment when they awaken, and it is the awakening that is the beginning of their disaster. As long as they are inspired by the artificial enthusiasms of unreality they do not have a sensitiveness of their own condition, but when the lights are extinguished and the wine has turned to gall and hearts have experienced the hypocrisy of being untrue, and life that was so brilliant and so highly adorned with all of the speculative fringes of unreality has finally subsided, then we see things as they are, and it is the beginning of that spiritual turmoil in which the soul and heart find themselves, then we are driven back to reality, we are not immersed in that far off vista of the unattainable but we are immersed in the experience of realism, that's the meaning of Lent! Lent is the opportunity for the denuding of the artificial of life and getting down to the barren reality of life, and every soul needs that. If you or I think that we are above that need, my dear people, you are just deceiving yourselves, that's all, and I would be deceiving myself. No matter how brilliant we may happen to be in the field of intellectuality, no matter how scientifically-minded we might think ourselves, no matter how these things may develop a sense of superiority so that we would feel that we are not a part, neither do we need the disciplining, let us not deceive

ourselves on this first Sunday of Lent.

I know that there are many listening to me now and they know by the very ring of my voice that I understand their tragedy, and there are people in this church this morning in this turmoil, and to you and for you, might I say to the very limit of my interest and my love and my affection for you that no one can perform a miracle for your life but that you must soon begin to see the necessity of a disciplining that you have never given it, that you cannot have your cake, and eat it too, a platitude which is bantered about on thoughtless lips, but like all platitudes has an essence of reality that I would sear into your deepest souls and hearts! You need not be in the throes of any liturgy of any church, you need not have upon your forehead the imprint of the cross by ashes, many of you have that imprint in your hearts, you may not feel the need of bowing at a altar or letting the sacred morsel of the bread of God touch your tongue, you may not feel the need of all the external caprices associated with the mere details of a religious practice, but in spirit and in your inner hearts and in your inner lives you know that I am speaking the truth, and the mere fact that some may not like it, and the mere fact that you may have switched the dial on your radio, and the mere fact that you are so perfectly contemporary that you are neglecting the spiritual technique of your own inner victory of life, you know that I am speaking words now which are indictments, and you know better than anyone in the world the reality of Lent, a wilderness of temptation, and just as the divine Poet of Nazareth, this vibrant dynamic human life of a great dreamer who put his own ideals so high that he himself dared not approximate their realization without the discipline of temptation. No temptation to a God is important. To tempt a God is only to add drops of water to the sea, insignificant. This man, at the beginning of his Lenten season, went into the wilderness. He knew that what I have been saying is true, he lived it, he understood it, and down in that wilderness for 40 days of his life, this young man, with blood spurting from the palms and the nails of his hands where he was clinging to the rocks fighting his battles in his soul of prayer and struggle, this man, leaving the association of his friends that he might cultivate the speculative attitude of human values, this man so treacherously near triumph that it frightened him, and he said to his inner self I cannot be God to these people, I cannot go further; I must suffer, I must experience what they experienced, I cannot feed, I cannot heal, I cannot preach any more, my soul is in a turmoil, I must be sure, I must be sure!' And into the garden he went, into the wilderness. He lost himself, and you think with your petty humanity that we do not need that? That we do not understand it because we are intellectually emancipated? That we do not need it because we have eliminated the supernatural aspect of religion? That we do not need it because we have an intellectual basis for our creedal philosophy of life? That the world does not need it?

Well, I am here to affirm that it does, and one of the reasons why the Roman Catholic Church in America is growing, and one reason why the Lutheran Church is growing, why they are building great, beautiful, temples of worship to God in these denominations who are holding firm and true to the fundamental principles of a certain attitude in religion, is because they know that reality, not subterfuge, not explanations, not sophistry, not self-sufficiency, not the deification of the intellect, not compromising with life, not diplomatic in the presence of moral issues, they know that you cannot serve mammon and God and upon that do

they build, and within the experience of your soul and mine in the field of religion at this Lenten season, let us not miss the truth of Lent because we are emancipated minds, because we feel that the Church has no pressure and no force! Let us see Lent in the terms of that great Heart in his own Lenten season.

I see him this morning, and what was it? Temptation, temptation! And what was the nature of the temptation? Demonstration of his power, demonstration of his God-head. Did he succumb to that temptation? I read you the story this morning: 'If you are the son of God, touch those stones and make them bread and let's see you eat? You are hungry, forty days you have been fasting in the wilderness, forty days you have been fighting with the beasts who would devour you, forty days, and now, if you think you are God, touch that stone and eat and let us see what you are, demonstrate to us!' The world has always tempted power just like that, and the world is doing it today. That's one of the most modern temptations in the whole field of temptation. 'Demonstrate your power! Let's see what you can do?' And this emaciated, hungry soul knew this truth, that if he had eaten, himself, that he would have had no power to have fed the 5,000! His victory was a spiritual victory, not a victory of the flesh. Do you think this story is real? Of course, it is! It is just as real as hands and feet and beating hearts. This story follows definitely every psychological law of reality of human experience. Go home and read it again and see how true it is. And when the tempter stood beside him and said: 'Why, let us see a demonstration. Look, you are on a high pinnacle, a high pinnacle, look, people can see you and you can see people, and the street down there is just filled with people looking at you on the pinnacle, and if you are what you say you are, jump and let these angels hold you up so that you will fall lightly to the earth unhurt and demonstrate that you are a God.' The world is always demanding that, it is demanding it now, and the Master was too great to fall in that trap. Why, that spirit of his could penetrate the ages without injury. He could stand upon the pinnacle of eternity and hold the cosmos in the hollow of his hand his spiritual development was such, but he did not meet that temptation with their point of view. The final one was when that same tempter and that same philosophy of temptation, these have been knocking at the doors of your hearts, they are knocking now, every life experiences them! Don't think that this is remote, separate and segregated, it is in my life and yours and we must do something about it this Lenten season! We must do something about this! Don't think you can neglect it, I must not neglect it. There are values here and there are ideals and there are realities that must be synchronized.

Let us get down to this basis of reality and the greatest temptation of all in the wilderness of Lent is the temptation of power! 'Look, you are on a high mountain, look to the south, look to the north, look to the east, look to the west, see all that fertile land, valley after valley, farm after farm, mountain after mountain! Look! I will give it unto thee, fall down and worship me and all the earth shall be yours!' This man, tired, hungry, lonely, starving, fighting out with himself the problems of life! This man who never had a home of his own, this man who was a beggar and impoverished, this man could have had the world if he had not learned the true meaning of Lent!"

PASTOR'S CALENDAR

Preston Bradley kept the following engagements during the month of January:

3—Two Sermons, Peoples Church

4—Address, Woman's Club, Peoples Church

5—Address, Daughters of the Renaissance
6—Book Lecture, Peoples Church
7—Address, Woman's Ideal Club
9—Meeting, IWLA Executive Board
10—Two Sermons, Peoples Church
11—Address, 100th Anniversary St. Johns' Joliet, Ill.
12—Address, Library Dedication, Medinah Club
13—Book Lecture, Peoples Church
14—Address, Rochester, Ind.
15—Meeting, Board of Trustees, Peoples Church
16—Radio Address, WCFL, Montparnasse Forum
17—Two Sermons, Peoples Church
18—Meetings, Mayor's Committee, City Hall
18—Address, Austin Evening Forum
19—Address, Annual Banquet, Pekin, Ill.
20—Book Lecture, Peoples Church
21—Address, Friends of Literature
22—Address, Welles Park Woman's Club
22—Address, Junior Association of Commerce
24—Two Sermons, Peoples Church
25—Radio Address, WCFL
26—Chamber of Commerce, Streator, Ill.
27—Book Lecture, Peoples Church
28—Address, Annual Dinner, Sioux City, Iowa
29—Commencement Address, Tilden High School
31—Two Sermons, Peoples Church
31—Address, Chicago Woman's Club

FUNERALS

5—Leonard Rosenquist, Interment, Mt. Olive
6—Sven Mortenson, Interment, Graceland
9—Grace Elliott, Interment, Matteson, Ill.
9—Mrs. Harry Esterly, Interment, Acacia Park
15—John Heidegger, Interment, Rosehill
16—William Nolte, Interment, Rosehill
23—Mrs. Elizabeth Robinson, Interment, Rosehill
27—Mrs. Minnie Bahr, Interment, Rosehill
29—Walter Haenichen, Interment, Graceland
30—Mrs. Fred N. Peet, Interment, Milwaukee

WEDDINGS

1—Ernest Harry Gramatta and Amelia Helen Gill
11—Wesley K. Hayes and Anna Lee Waller
16—Herman Heller and Lillian Messenger
30—Rudolph Bernhardt and Ruth Eisenmann
30—Charles Gilbert Wise and Dorothy Lucille Miller
31—Delos Earl Selix and Evelyn M. Ewing
31—Rocco Marrandino and Veronica Frucci

WEDNESDAY BOOK LECTURES

The attendance and interest in the regular Wednesday evening Book Lectures continues with giving of every lecture. December and January in spite of the holiday season and the inclement weather found hundreds of people present each Wednesday evening. During the month of March Dr. Bradley will review the most vital and interesting series of books he has ever chosen in the five years of the lectureship. The following books will be discussed:

March 3rd—"The Human Comedy" by James Harvey Robinson

March 10th—"A Declaration of Interdependence" by Harry Overstreet

March 17th—"The Mountain and the Plain" by Herbert Gorman

March 24th—"The Return To Religion" by Prof. Link

March 31st—"Invasion" by Van DerMeerch

All of these books are now available at your book store. All seats are free and a very cordial invitation is extended to everyone. Many students from the high schools, universities and colleges in the Chicago area are attending. These are the most largely attended regular book lectures in this country. March portends the best month in the entire season.

HAVE YOU READ DR. BRADLEY'S BOOKS?

No finer Lenten reading or Easter gifts could be made to help and inspire your friends than copies of Dr. Bradley's three books which are constantly growing in circulation and demand. They are entitled, "Courage For Today," "Mastering Fear" and "Power from Right Thinking." The books sell for $1.50 each and can be procured from all book stores, and Department Store Book Sections. If a book shop is unavailable you may order direct from the publishers Bobbs Merrill and Co., in Indianapolis, Ind. These books contain the very heart of Dr. Bradley's philosophy. Each has passed through several editions.

THE LENTEN SEASON

Dr. Bradley is giving a series of Sunday morning sermons during Lent on "Religious Foundations" which are attracting a great amount of interest. On Sunday evening during the Lenten season he is speaking on "Triumphant Living." During Holy Week beginning March 21st, he will speak every noon in the Erlanger Theater in the heart of Chicago at 12:10 p. m. until 12:40, All friends and radio listeners in the loop are invited. He will preach every evening at 8:00 o'clock in the Peoples Church. The annual Communion service will be held on Maundy Thursday evening and the very impressive Good Friday service will begin at 8:00 o'clock sharp. All morning services of the church are broadcast by Chicago's largest independent radio station WJJD. More details of the church season will be given in the March number.

The Silver Jubilee Anniversary Dinner of the church which celebrates 25 years of our pastor's ministry among us will be held at the Palmer House in Chicago on the evening of April 15th, at 6:30 sharp. Reservations are now being made. Tickets $2.00. The civic, educational and religious life of Chicago will be represented. Plan to attend.

THE WOMAN'S CLUB

Reciprocity Day falling on February 1st, will furnish the outstanding program of the month. Officers of clubs in the Ninth District will be guests of the club on that day. A group of dancers, mostly children, from the Chicago Musical College will give an attractive program, and Mrs. Dora Reynolds will give a talk on her "European Trip Last Summer." Refreshments will be served during the Social Hour. Feb-8th, the department of radio will give a program with Mrs. A. M. Cameron as chairman.

February 15th, the club members and friends will make a tour of the Chicago Historical Society, conducted by a special guide. Mrs. Robert Byron is the chairman.

A Washington Birthday Party will be held on February 22nd, at the Edgewater Beach. Mrs. Jerry Sill will give a talk on the "History of Our Flag." There are other interesting things planned for this special day to mark it with interest.

And now we turn into the last winter month —March— which ushers in the official first day of spring—And so also we look toward Easter—coming early this year on March 28th.

WHILE MY GARDEN SLEEPS

By Grace Thayer Bradley

While my garden sleeps,
snug under a coverlid of snow,
bright stars their vigil keep
and time passes by on tip-toe.

Gazing from my window
one dark winter day;
at a sky all clouded and gray:
sadly I noticed the frozen space
that in summer is colorful and sweet;
and I sighed as I thought of
my garden asleep.

Softly snow flakes began to fly,
I smiled, watching them flutter by:
imagining them petals
scattered by the wind!
Showers of petals—falling from the sky!
And then—I too—fell asleep.

Such an enchanting scene
my eyes could not believe
as I gazed—
from the window—amazed!

When I awoke,
there laid my garden;
by fairy hands—unseen,
fashioned in wonderous grace.

Tall stalks of larkspur,
with foliage like lace;
stems crowded with Canterbury Bells,
playing silvery tunes;
lilacs for background,
heavy with blooms;
Oriental poppies, nodding drowsy heads,
clusters of snap-draggons,
like feathery plumes.
The ground, all round about
carpeted with forget-me-nots
So glistening white and pure each flower
as though grown to deck a bridal bower!

Just as summers growth and plan
by frost and north-wind was scattered.
When touched by warming sun
this fairy garden will be shattered:
melting slowly—into the ground to seep,
making fertile the earth—
through which—in Spring
every growing, greening thing,
will creep.

Winter months pass slowly by,
under cold—leaden—somber sky.
Rose buds, lilies and all lovely flowers
that breathe their scented beauty
into sunny hours,
are fashioned in dreams;
modeled in snow
for next summer's plan.

While tall pines, like sentinels
their silent watch keep—
Flowers are dreamed into being;
~~dreamed~~
While my garden—sleeps.

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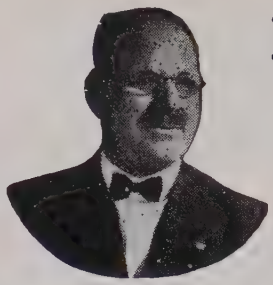

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